

Patent Application of
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for
ATTACHABLE SURGICAL TABLE

CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

Not Applicable.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

Not Applicable.

MICROFICHE APPENDIX

Not Applicable

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention.

This invention relates to the field of medicine. More specifically, the invention comprises a surgical table which can be attached directly to a common type of X-ray machine.

2. Description of the Related Art.

X-ray machines have been used in the practice of medicine for many decades. One such machine in common use is referred to as a "C-arm" machine. FIG. 1 depicts one example of such a machine. Those skilled in the art will know that a wide variety of such machines are in use. They generally share the same major components, however.

C-arm machine 10 is supported by base 12, which is typically furnished with lockable castors so that the machine can be easily moved to a desired location and fixed. Main housing 14 attaches to the base. This element provides structural support and also often houses the necessary electronic equipment. Sliding joint support 16 protrudes upward and forward from main housing 14. Pivot joint 18 rotatably attaches C-arm support 30 to sliding joint support 16. C-arm 22 is slidably attached to sliding joint support 16 by sliding joint 20. In the particular type of machine illustrated, pivot joint 18 and sliding joint 20 can be adjusted as desired - then locked into position.

The reader should be aware that not all C-arm machines have the adjustment features described. Simpler machines may be fixed in the position shown. The invention described hereinafter typically employs the C-arm machine in the position shown. Thus, the various adjustment features which a particular machine may possess are not significant to the present invention.

C-arm machine 10, like most X-ray devices, includes an emitter 24 and image intensifier 26. Though a discussion of X-ray machine technology is beyond the scope of this disclosure, those skilled

in the art will know that emitter 24 generates X-rays and image intensifier 26 is generally configured to receive these rays and provide a useable image. Those skilled in the art will also know that the position of emitter 24 and image intensifier 26 may be reversed. Some image intensifiers 26 include a lip 64, which may assume the form of a gripping handle.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention comprises a small surgical table which can be attached directly to a C-arm X-ray machine. A flat plate of X-ray transparent material is provided as a surface on which surgical procedures can be performed. Clamping features are provided on the underside of this plate to allow its attachment to an image intensifier or an emitter of a C-arm machine. The clamping features are preferably made readily adjustable in order to allow the attachment of the surgical table to a wide variety of X-ray machines.

The invention is particularly suited for surgeries involving a small portion of the anatomy - such as the hand. The direct attachment of the surgical table to the X-ray machine allows the surgeon to conveniently visualize the internal placement of orthopaedic hardware and other features both before and during the surgery.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is an isometric view, showing a prior art C-arm X-ray machine.

FIG. 2 is an isometric view, showing the present invention.

FIG. 3 is an isometric view, showing the present invention from a different perspective.

FIG. 4 is an isometric detail view, showing the features attaching the invention to the X-ray machine.

FIG. 5 is an isometric detail view, showing the features attaching the invention to the X-ray machine.

FIG. 6 is an isometric detail view, showing the features attaching the invention to the X-ray machine.

FIG. 7 is an isometric view, showing the attachment of the invention to an X-ray machine.

FIG. 8 is an isometric view, showing the attachment of the invention to an X-ray machine.

FIG. 9 is an isometric view, showing the attachment of the invention to an X-ray machine.

FIG. 10 is an isometric view, showing the invention configured for use.

FIG. 11 is an isometric view, showing an alternate embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 12 is an isometric view, showing an alternate embodiment of the invention.

REFERENCE NUMERALS IN THE DRAWINGS

10	C-arm machine	12	base
14	main housing	16	sliding joint support
18	pivot joint	20	sliding joint
22	C-arm	24	emitter
26	image intensifier	28	mounting surface
30	C-arm support	32	surgical table

34	main plate	36	track
38	slider	40	jaw
42	locking lever	44	toggle slider
46	toggle lever	48	thrust link
50	gripping pad	52	cylindrical surface
54	conventional table	56	head support
58	spring clip	60	swivel slider
62	swivel jaw	64	lip
66	protrusion		

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

FIG. 1 shows prior art C-arm machine 10. It is generally used to X-ray specific regions of a patient's anatomy. Base 12 is provided with castors which allow the machine to be rolled into a desired location. Pivot joint 18 can be rotated to angularly displace the plane in which C-arm 22 resides. Sliding joint 20 can be unlocked to allow C-arm 22 to slide along the arc of its curvature. Thus, C-arm 22 is ultimately adjustable in roll and pitch.

C-arm 22 structurally mounts emitter 24 and image intensifier 26. Emitter 24 controllably emits a stream of X-rays toward image intensifier 26. Image intensifier 26 receives the stream of X-rays and enhances them for visualization, which is typically accomplished through a computer monitor. The anatomical features to be X-rayed must generally be placed proximate a line drawn between emitter 24 and image intensifier 26.

Many types of C-arm machines are in common use. The relative location of the emitter and image intensifier may be reversed on some machines. The mounting and positioning features of other machines are also different from the one shown in FIG. 1. The present invention is suitable for use with a wide variety of machines, and should not be viewed as limited to any one particular type.

FIG. 2 shows the present invention. Main plate 34 is its primary structural component. The upper surface of main plate 34 serves as a surgical site. The lower surface contains mounting features. Main plate 34 is made of a material which allows the free transmission of X-rays with minimal absorption or distortion. FIG. 3 shows the lower side of the invention. Three tracks 36 are provided. These tracks are angularly displaced in 120 degree increments, with the outer extreme of each track being proximate an edge of main plate 34 and the inner extreme of each track being proximate the center of main plate 34.

Two tracks are equipped with sliders 38. Each slider 38 has a jaw 40 and a locking lever 42. Each slider 38 is free to slide within its track 36 until its locking lever 42 is pulled downward, at which point the locking lever 42 toggles into a locked position and locks the slider 38 in its track 36. The third track 36 is occupied by toggle slider 44. Toggle slider 44 is likewise free to slide within its track until toggle lever 46 is pressed upward.

FIG. 4 shows track 36 and slider 38 in greater detail. The reader will observe that track 36 is cut in the shape of a dovetail - as is the upper portion of slider 38. Track 36 also exits an edge of main plate 34. This allows slider 38 to be easily removed from main plate 34 for sterilization or other purposes. Jaw 40 descends from slider 38. This feature is intended to actually engage a portion of the X-ray machine. Locking lever 42 is pivotally mounted to slider 38. When it is rotated downward, slider 38 is locked in position within track 36. A variety of mechanisms can be employed to achieve

this function. Other features could also be substituted for locking lever 42. As such mechanical locking features are well known, they have not been illustrated in detail.

The reader will observe the position and nature of protrusion 66. It is intended for use with a C-arm machine having a lip 64. For C-arm machines not having a lip 64, protrusion 66 can be omitted (as will be explained in more detail subsequently).

FIG. 5 shows toggle slider 44 in detail. Its upper portion is also formed in the shape of a dovetail in order to engage a track 36. Jaw 40 is identical to the one found on slider 38 (including the optional addition of a protrusion 66). Toggle lever 46 is pivotally mounted on toggle slider 44. Thrust link 48 is pivotally mounted on toggle lever 46 (to preferably form a classic "four bar" linkage). When toggle lever 46 is pushed upward, two things occur: (1) toggle slider 44 is initially stopped in its place within its track 38, and (2) The upper extreme of thrust link 48 bears against main plate 34 and thrusts toggle slider 44 slightly forward (to the left in the view as shown). This action provides significant clamping force, as will be explained subsequently.

FIG. 6 shows slider 38 from another perspective. Gripping pad 50 - made of a resilient material - is preferably placed on the inward facing surface of jaw 40 in order to prevent marring a surface against which jaw 40 rests. If a protrusion 66 is included, it is likewise given a non-marring face.

The installation and use of the invention are explained in FIGs. 7 through 10. The invention is typically installed on the image intensifier of a C-arm X-ray machine. In FIG. 7, surgical table 32 is shown near image intensifier 26. It is preferably mounted directly over mounting surface 28. It should be mounted very nearly parallel with mounting surface 28 in order to provide the best possible X-ray images.

The user typically retracts the two sliders **38** and toggle slider **44** to positions near the edges of main plate **34**. Main plate **34** is then placed atop mounting surface **28**, as shown in FIG. 8. Main plate **34** is maneuvered into a desired position. The two sliders **38** are then pushed forward in their respective tracks **36** until the two jaws **40** rest against cylindrical surface **52**. The two locking levers **42** are then rotated downward to lock the two sliders **38** in position.

In the case of a C-arm machine having a lip **64** (the version actually shown in the drawings), the mechanical interface will be different. The jaws **40** actually clear the outer perimeter of lip **64**. Protrusions **66** then actually bear against cylindrical surface **58**.

Turning now to FIG. 9 - toggle slider **44** is advanced until its jaw **40** (or protrusion **66**, in the case of a machine having a lip) likewise rests against cylindrical surface **52**. Toggle lever **46** is then rotated upward as shown. This action pushes toggle slider **44** forward with respect to its track and then locks it in place (such as by the action of toggling a four bar linkage over center or other known mechanical means). Thus, the three jaws **40** (or protrusions **66**) are drawn tightly against cylindrical surface **52**, thereby affixing main plate **34** atop mounting surface **28**.

The result is a small surgical table affixed directly to the C-arm machine. This allows the surgeon to perform surgical procedures directly over the X-ray image intensifier. Accurate X-ray visualization of the anatomy proximate the surgical site is therefore enhanced.

Surgical table **32** is preferably used in conjunction with prior art devices for holding the patient in position. FIG. 10 shows one possible configuration. C-arm machine **10** with attached surgical table **32** is placed next to conventional table **54** with head support **56**. The patient is placed face-up on conventional table **54**. The patient's right arm would then be extended out to the patient's

right, where the patient's hand/wrist area could be secured to surgical table 32. The surgeon would then perform a procedure on the patient's hand while it remains affixed to surgical table 32.

As one example - the surgeon may need to place orthopaedic hardware in the patient's hand to repair a fracture. X-ray images can be taken before, during, and after the placement of the hardware to ensure the surgeon's satisfaction with the placement.

The adjustable features shown on surgical table 32 allow its use with a variety of different machines. Much simpler hardware can be used to attach the table to a particular type of machine. FIG. 11 shows main plate 34 with four descending resilient spring clips 58. These are fixed in place for use with an image intensifier having a known diameter. The elastic nature of these spring clips 58 allow them to grip cylindrical surface 52 on image intensifier 26 and hold surgical table 32 in place. Simpler fastening hardware can also be employed if the modification of the X-ray machine is allowed (such as screws, screw clamps, and the like).

It is also possible to attach the surgical table to the X-ray emitter rather than the image intensifier. Returning briefly to FIG. 1, the reader will observe that emitter 24 assumes a generally rectangular shape. The three jaw clamping system depicted in FIG. 3 is ill suited for mounting on this geometry. FIG. 12 shows a second alternate embodiment configured for mounting on an emitter. Four jaws are used instead of three. Four swivel slider 60 each adjustably slide within four tracks 36. Each swivel slider 60 has a pivotally mounted swivel jaw 62. Swivel jaws 62 are capable of swiveling to bear against irregular surfaces when the fourth swivel sliders 60 are advanced to lock main plate 34 in position over an emitter. Four locking levers 42 are provided to lock the swivel sliders in position. One or more toggle levers may also be provided to give added clamping force. As for

the prior examples, protrusions **66** can be added for each of the swivel jaws **62** in order to accommodate the presence of a lip on the C-arm machine.

The preceding description contains significant detail regarding the novel aspects of the present invention. It should not be construed, however, as limiting the scope of the invention but rather as providing illustrations of the preferred embodiments of the invention. Thus, the scope of the invention should be fixed by the following claims, rather than by the examples given.